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HISTORY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, MOUNT CARMEL, WABASH COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

BY MRS. EFFIE J. KEEN.

The church property was purchased of the trustees of the Presbyterian church by Bishop Seymour in July 1881. At that time the chapel was completed and furnished, the walls of the church proper were partially built and afterward completed and the structure covered.

The first missionary was the Rev. J. S. Lassater, who came in November 1881, and in connection with his duties as missionary, opened a school, with Miss Elizabeth Smith as assistant.

In 1882 the rectory was built. In June 1883 the Rev. J. S. Lassater gave up the work and removed from the diocese. The Rev. Ruall followed with a few months stay and then moved to Mattoon. The third missionary was the Rev. R. B. Hoyt, who came in August 1884 and labored very acceptably for two years, and in 1886 on account of failing health, gave up the work and afterward died at the Bishop's House in Springfield. In July 1886 the Rev. H. C. Dyer came to the mission and labored until December 1887, when he resigned.

The mission now became vacant and remained so until June 1889. Services were conducted by Dr. John McClurkin as lay reader, with monthly visits from the Rev. Dr. Frost, the dean of Carlyle.

In June 1889, the Rev. J. B. Debbage, of Canada, was sent to us as a missionary. His work terminated within a year and he returned to his native land. During his stay Dr. McClurkin was ordained a deacon. In November 1891, Rev. Horace B. Goodyear came to the Mission, and under his influence it prospered.

On St. John Day, 1892 the mission was formally organized, Bishop Seymour nominating the following officers for the remainder of the synodical year:

Warden, Karl Wirth.

Clerk, Joseph C. Hall.

Treasurer, Rev. John C. McClurkin.

At this time the name was changed from St. Paul to St. John Baptist at the request of Bishop Seymour.

On account of failing health, the Rev. H. B. Goodyear gave up the work in June 1895 and returned to New York.

Rev. J. C. Colton came as rector of the mission in December 1895 and remained until March 1900.

Rev. J. C. Colton was succeeded by Rev. D. D. Chapin who remained one year.

Rev. R. A. Russell was rector for one year, coming in 1903.

Rev. T. W. Datson was priest in charge during 1905-6. He was succeeded by Rev. W. B. Thorn, who remained only four months, 1906-7.

Rev. H. H. Mitchell was appointed to the charge, May 28, 1907. He resigned in May, 1908.

In his time the old church ruin was pulled down and the rectory enlarged and remodeled. A tower was built and other improvements were made to the chapel.

On Easter day, 1908, Bishop Osborne formed a church council, as follows:

Wardens, Earl Wirth, J. C. Utter.

Treasurer, H. C. Steinbrucker.

Clerk, John H. Hucheson.

Councillors—Joseph Wirth, Frank Bingham, Richard Haley, Lyell Hill.

The Rev. T. W. C. Cheeseman was in charge from 1908 to 1912, removing to Pekin, Ill.

The Rev. H. G. Trickett succeeded Rev. Cheeseman, remaining about two years.

Since Mr. Trickett's departure there has been no regular priest in charge.

At the present time (1918) the work is being carried on by Rev. Dr. Keuhn, field missionary.